

**HANDBOOK FOR  
HOMEBOUND SERVICES**

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**REVISED MARCH 2003**

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# HANDBOOK FOR HOMEBOUND SERVICES

Revised March 2003

Virginia Department of Education Office of Student Services

## Introduction

The Board of Education through the regulations establishing *Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, requires that “Homebound instruction shall be made available to students who are confined at home or in a health care facility for periods that would prevent normal school attendance based upon certification of need by a licensed physician or licensed clinical psychologist. For students eligible for special education or related services, the Individualized Education Program committee must revise the IEP, as appropriate 8VAC 20-131-180 off-site instruction. Credit for the work shall be awarded when it is done under the supervision of a licensed teacher, a person eligible to hold a Virginia license, or other appropriately licensed professional employed by the local school board, and meets the requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-100.” This handbook has been developed to provide guidance for school divisions in the provision of homebound instructional services.

## Overview of Services

Homebound instruction is designed to provide continuity of educational services between classrooms and homes or health care facilities for students whose medical needs, both physical and psychiatric, contraindicate school attendance. Additionally, homebound instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for children with health impairments whose conditions may interfere with regular school attendance (e.g., students receiving dialysis, or radiation/chemotherapy; or children with disabilities). Homebound services are available to all students enrolled in a public school in Virginia.

Homebound instruction is temporary. While no specific number of days can be set due to the many complex variations among children, the “temporary” requirement is based on the premise that instruction should take place in the school setting to the fullest extent possible. The inability to attend school for medical reasons, both physical and psychiatric, must be certified by a licensed physician or licensed clinical psychologist.

Continuity of educational services for a student receiving homebound instruction is essential. Regular communication with appropriate school personnel should be maintained by the homebound teacher. The curriculum tests, assignments, and materials of the student’s home school should be utilized. Assignments from the home school may be adopted to meet a student’s individual needs, based on physical or psychiatric ability as determined by the individual’s medical status.

The goal of homebound services is to facilitate a student’s return to the classroom setting. A transition plan for returning a student to school should be prepared and recorded by the school division.

## Eligibility for Homebound Services

A student is eligible for homebound instruction if evidence verifies that he or she is unable to attend the public school as the result of physical, emotional, or psychiatric problems. Eligibility is determined by local school personnel on the basis of medical certification submitted by a licensed physician or licensed clinical psychologist.

For a student eligible for special education and related services, the IEP team must revise the IEP to meet the individual's temporary needs. *The Regulation Governing Special Education Program for Children with Disabilities in Virginia, effective March 27, 2002*, states that, "Homebound instruction means academic instruction provided to students who are confined at home or in a health care facility for periods that would prevent normal school attendance based upon certification of need by a licensed physician or licensed clinical psychologist. For a child with a disability, the IEP must determine the delivery of services, including the number of hours of services" (8VAC 20-80-10 Definitions).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should also be considered in determining of eligibility for services. A student may be determined nondisabled for special education purposes, but may be considered handicapped in accordance with Section 504. If so, the 504 plan must be revised to meet the specific temporary need of the student.

## Initiation of Service

Homebound instruction should be initiated as soon as possible and instruction should begin no later than five business days upon receipt of the medical certification submitted by a licensed physician or licensed clinical psychologist. This medical information is submitted directly to the school superintendent or designee. When administrative processing delays initiation of homebound service, efforts should be documented and explained to the parent or parents. If the school division experiences difficulty finding a homebound provider, the division is encouraged to offer compensatory time to maximize the student's ability to successfully return to school. Offering compensatory time is a local decision.

## Review and Termination of Service

Students receiving homebound instruction should return to the school setting as soon as medically possible. Homebound services should always be considered temporary and should be based on the premise that instruction should take place in the school setting to the fullest extent possible. Termination of homebound instruction should be indicated by the attending physician or attending licensed clinical psychologist after examination of the student. The homebound teacher has the responsibility for assisting a student, family, and school with his or her transition to the school's routine. If a student has a disability, the IEP team must be involved in the review and termination process.

## Hours of Homebound Instruction

The number of hours provided for homebound instruction should be based on a student's individual needs. The following are suggested guidelines for school divisions.

Elementary school students should receive a minimum of five hours per week. Middle school students should receive a minimum of eight hours per week. High school students should receive a minimum of five hours per week for two credit subjects or ten hours per week for three or four subjects. Again, if appropriate to the needs of the child, the number of instructional hours may vary. All time allotments for homebound instruction should be made in consultation with the attending physician or clinical psychologist and with the IEP team for children with disabilities.

A student who receives homebound instruction is carried on the daily register of the class in which he or she is enrolled, provided instruction is received as specified. A student must be enrolled in public school in Virginia to receive homebound services.

Homebound instruction is intended to be a temporary procedure. Requests for homebound instruction extending beyond nine weeks should be substantiated by a statement treatment plan from the attending physician or licensed clinical psychologist. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide this information to the school division's homebound coordinator. The goal of homebound services is to facilitate the student's return to the current classroom setting.



## Responsibility for Provision of Services The School Division

The school division is responsible for providing of instructional services for students who must be temporarily confined at home or in a health care facility. The school division is also responsible for providing homebound services to a student confined in another county or city in Virginia and to qualified students confined in another state, if those students meet the homebound eligibility requirements.

The school division is required to develop a procedure for providing such services and to designate an individual to coordinate the service for the school division. The school division is required to submit annual reports for reimbursement, make a good faith effort to employ a qualified teacher to provide services in a timely manner, ensure the continuity of instructional services to the student, and provide for any other arrangements essential to homebound instruction.

## The School

A student receiving homebound instruction is carried on the class roll of his or her assigned school. The school, through the teacher, guidance counselor, or other person designated by the principal, will:

- provide the homebound teacher with appropriate materials and information to enable the student to keep up with his/her class;

- maintain close contact with the homebound teacher to monitor the progress of the student and changes in any medical condition; and

- provide information on the curriculum and instructional strategies to the homebound teacher who responsible for keeping the school informed of the student's progress and needs.

## The Program Coordinator

The individual designated to coordinate homebound services for a school division is a vital link in the appropriate provision of services. The designated coordinator will receive requests for homebound instruction and review them for completeness and appropriateness. The coordinator assists in assuring that requests for homebound instruction are properly validated through the child's attending physician or licensed clinical psychologist and communicated to appropriate school personnel. The coordinator also may assume responsibilities for the overall provision of services, including facilitating the initiation of the services, securing a homebound teacher, and the coordination of the service delivery (e.g., family, student, physician, licensed clinical psychologist, or other school personnel). The coordinator is most important in reviewing the amount of time the student receives services, assisting in the process of evaluating and terminating services, and facilitating the student's return to instruction in the classroom.

## The Student/Parent/Guardian

The student, parent, or guardian(s) is expected to work cooperatively with the assigned homebound teacher in:

- providing an environment conducive to learning;
- ensuring that a responsible adult is present in the home when the homebound teacher is working with the student;
- keeping the all appointments with the homebound teacher. (Excessively missed appointments may result in the student's inability to earn credits or to be promoted);
- making every effort to keep up with school assignments; and
- advising the homebound teacher of any change in medical status that would necessitate modification or termination of homebound services.

## The Homebound Teacher Professional Qualifications

An individual employed as a homebound teacher must hold a Virginia teacher's license or be determined eligible for such by the Division of Teacher Education and Licensure of the Virginia Department of Education. In case of the latter, the school division must maintain documentation that the teacher's credentials have been examined and the teacher would be eligible for a license as a regular employee. Homebound teachers must be employed and supervised by designated officials of a school division. A homebound teacher should have a broad background of professional training and experience to adapt instruction to each student's needs. Teachers engaging in academic instruction in the home should also be able to adjust to varied home situations.

## Responsibilities of the Homebound Teacher

Persons serving as homebound teachers should:

- maintain close contact with the student's teachers and counselor to develop and implement appropriate educational programs;
- maintain and file with the designated school division representative an accurate record of the hours of instruction provided for each assigned student; and
- submit students' grades to the designated school representative prior to the end of the marking period, maintaining a copy of the grades with the homebound records.

The homebound teacher is responsible for assigning grades only for the work covered during the period of homebound instruction. These grades are to be averaged with the others earned by the student during the regular school progress.

The homebound teacher is essential part of the team of persons whose function is to provide materials and instruction that will enable the homebound student to maintain academic progress while he or she is not able to attend the regular school program. It is important for the teacher to recognize that the homebound instructional program is a modification of and should be comparable to the regular school program.

## Reimbursement of Instruction Cost

A student receiving homebound instruction is counted in average daily membership (ADM). Subject to the availability of funds, reimbursement is based upon the composite index of ability to pay. Reimbursement payments are made to school divisions in the year following the delivery of services. The amount of the reimbursement is based on prior year's data submitted by school divisions.

Reimbursement for homebound services are made to a school division for payment made directly to teachers employed by the division. Payments do not include third-party payments to health care facilities. School divisions requesting reimbursement will be paid for claims of actual instructional time by the homebound teachers. The Department of Education does not reimburse school divisions for planning time, travel, or fringe benefits. School divisions must submit a request for reimbursement, including the name(s) of the homebound teacher(s), the number of hours of instruction, the hourly rate as determined by the school division, verification that the instructional hours were provided by an individual licensed or eligible for licensure, and other information that maybe requested by the Department of Education. Only homebound students with supporting medical information should be submitted for homebound reimbursement.

All homebound forms, including certification, termination, and requests for reimbursement of state funds should be properly signed and maintained on file by school divisions.

## The Glossary of Terms and Phrases

Homebound Instruction - temporary academic instruction provided to students in the home or health facility who are confined due to the inability to attend school for a limited time due to medical, physical, or emotional reasons.

Confined – restricted or limited from attendance at a regular public school during the regular school hours due to physical, medical, or emotional circumstances. The definition does not apply to situations wherein students are confined due to discipline or non-medically based situations.

Temporary – existing for a short time, or for a limited time. The term implies an arrangement established with no thought of continuance but with the idea of being changed soon. However, it is expected that the time required for homebound services would be based on the premise that every student should be maintained in the regular school setting to the greatest extent possible.

Licensed Teacher – an individual who has met all the current requirements for a teacher in the Commonwealth of Virginia and holds a license from the Board of Education.

Licensed Physician – a person who has been trained in the field of medicine, has met the state's licensing requirements and received certificates recognizing that achievement. In regard to the provision of homebound services, it is expected that the physician would be treating a condition that falls within his or her experience and training.

Psychiatrist – an individual trained in the practice or the science of treating mental diseases. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor (M.D.).

Licensed Clinical Psychologist – a psychologist trained and licensed by the Virginia Board of Psychology to practice clinically or in the state in which he/she practices. For the purposes of eligibility, the licensed clinical psychologist must be in a treatment relationship with the student to meet requirements for requesting homebound services.

Regular School Year – the period of time between the opening day of school in the fall and the closing day of school for that school term.

Eligible Student – a student enrolled in a public school, for whom the need for homebound services has been appropriately documented and certified.

Home-based instruction - means services that are delivered in the home setting (or



other agreed upon setting) in accordance with the child's individual education program.

Homebound instruction – means academic instruction provided to students who are confined at home or in a health care facility for periods that would prevent normal school attendance based upon certification of need by a licensed physician or licensed clinical psychologist. For a child with a disability, the IEP must determine the delivery of services, including the number of hours services.

Home instruction – means instruction of a child or children by a parent or parents, guardian or other person having control or charge of such child or children as an alternative to attendance in a public or private school in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Virginia. This instruction may also be termed home schooling.

Home tutoring – means instruction by a tutor or teacher with qualifications prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education, as an alternative to attendance in a public or private school and approved by the division superintendent in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Virginia. This tutoring is often used as an alternative form of home schooling but is not home instruction as defined in the Code of Virginia.

## Questions and Answers

The following Frequently Asked Questions are provided to assist divisions. The answers supplied are very general and may vary depending upon other facts involved in an individual case.

- Q. Can either the school division or parents appeal the appropriateness of the services or the certification?
- A. Answers about the appropriateness of services can be made after all the facts and other information have been collected. While no formal appeal procedure is set in the handbook, in special education cases there may be a complaint within the special education procedures (see VAC 20-80-78). *Complaint Procedures - Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia, effective March 27, 2002.*
- Q. If a student lives in one school division in Virginia but attends school in another division or another state, which division has the responsibility for providing homebound services if they are needed?
- A. Eligibility for homebound services is based upon the student's enrollment in public school and the inability to attend school. Responsibility for providing services rests with the public school division in which the student is enrolled. Enrollment is based on the residency requirement set forth in the Code of Virginia (§22.1-3).
- Q. If two or more eligible students need instruction in the same subject at the same time and they live in the same home, such as a foster home or other group living facility, can they be instructed in a group?
- A. In this instance, it is reasonable to provide homebound services in a group setting unless age and grade level would dictate a one-to-one situation.
- Q. How should reimbursement be reported when more than one student was instructed at the same time?
- A. Reimbursement is based upon instructional hours delivered by the homebound teacher and not on the number of students instructed.
- Q. What forms must be sent to the Virginia Department of Education?
- A. Each school division submits an end-of-year report of homebound instruction services delivered. The reimbursement is based upon the information provided in

this report. The reimbursement request is sent out annually in a Superintendent's Memo.

Q. Can medical information submitted by a nurse, dentist, chiropractor physician, social worker, or licensed professional counselor be used to determine eligibility for homebound instruction?

A. No. Only a licensed physician or licensed psychologist can provide the certification of need for homebound service.

Q. When children enrolled in a public school are hospitalized in health care or psychiatric facilities that provide no education service, is the school division obligated to provide homebound instruction in the health care facility? This issue is further complicated by the fact that the hospital might be some distance from the community (many times out of the county, city, or state) in which the child resides.

A. Eligibility for homebound service is based upon the student's enrollment in a public school and the inability to attend school. Responsibility for providing the homebound services, regardless of location, is with the public school division, where the student is enrolled. Divisions may want to contract with other divisions to provide homebound service when distance is a factor.

Q. Will the Virginia Department of Education reimburse a school division for homebound services for a student to remain at home to care for a newborn child?

A. No. The Virginia Department of Education can only provide reimbursement for the eligible student (mother).

Q. Will the Virginia Department of Education reimburse a school division for providing homebound instruction to a group of pregnant teenagers at a school location?

A. No. The Virginia Department of Education will only reimburse LEAs for providing homebound services to students confined to home or health care facility. If a student can attend school to receive educational services the student is not eligible for homebound instruction.

Q. Does the Virginia Department of Education reimburse a school division for homebound services for a student parentally placed in a private school?

A. No, homebound services are provided only to students enrolled in public schools.

Q. Should students in block scheduling program receive more homebound service

than other secondary school students?

A. Not necessarily. The number of hours of services a student receives is based on a one-to-one model and is designed to meet the needs of the individual student.

Q. Does the Virginia Department of Education reimburse divisions for special education students who need homebound services?

A. The Virginia Department of Education will reimburse school divisions for homebound instruction provided only to those students (regular or special education) for whom there is certification of need by a licensed physician or a licensed clinical psychologist.

Q. Does the Virginia Department of Education reimburse for expenses incurred in providing homebound instruction to special education and regular classroom students for reasons other than medical concerns (discipline, home-based instruction, or non-medically based situations)?

A. No.

Contact

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